

§ 402.190

20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–08 Edition)

the test of furthering the specific public interest described in paragraph (b) of this section, we will determine whether it also furthers the requester's commercial interest and, if so, whether this effect outweighs the advancement of that public interest. In applying this second test, we will consider the following factors:

(1) Would the disclosure further a commercial interest of the requester, or of someone on whose behalf the requester is acting? "Commercial interests" include interests relating to business, trade, and profit. Not only profit-making corporations have commercial interests—so do nonprofit corporations, individuals, unions, and other associations. The interest of a representative of the news media in using the information for news dissemination purposes will not be considered a commercial interest.

(2) If disclosure would further a commercial interest of the requester, would that effect outweigh the advancement of the public interest defined in paragraph (b) of this section? Which effect is primary?

(d) *Deciding between waiver and reduction.* If the disclosure passes both tests, we will normally waive fees. However, in some cases we may decide only to reduce the fees. For example, we may do this when disclosure of some but not all of the requested records passes the tests.

(e) *Procedure for requesting a waiver or reduction.* You must make your request for a waiver or reduction at the same time you make your request for records. You should explain why you believe a waiver or reduction is proper under the analysis in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section. Only FOI Officers may make the decision whether to waive, or reduce, the fees. If we do not completely grant your request for a waiver or reduction, the denial letter will designate a review official. You may appeal the denial to that official. In your appeal letter, you should discuss whatever reasons are given in our denial letter. The process prescribed in § 402.190 of this part will also apply to these appeals.

§ 402.190 Officials who may deny a request for records under FOIA.

Only the Deputy Executive Director for the Office of Public Disclosure, Office of the General Counsel, SSA, or her or his designee is authorized to deny a written request to obtain, inspect, or copy any social security record.

[62 FR 4154, Jan. 29, 1997, as amended at 68 FR 60295, Oct. 22, 2003]

§ 402.195 How a request is denied.

(a) *Oral requests.* If we cannot comply with your oral request because the Deputy Executive Director for the Office of Public Disclosure, Office of the General Counsel (or designee) has not previously made a determination to release the record you want, we will tell you that fact. If you still wish to pursue your request, you must put your request in writing.

(b) *Written requests.* If you make a written request and the information or record you requested will not be released, we will send you an official denial in writing. We will explain why the request was denied (for example, the reasons why the requested document is subject to one or more clearly described exemptions), will include the name and title or position of the person who made the decision, and what your appeal rights are.

(c) *Unproductive searches.* We make a diligent search for records to satisfy your request. Nevertheless, we may not be able always to find the records you want using the information you provided, or they may not exist. If we advise you that we have been unable to find the records despite a diligent search, this does not constitute a denial of your request.

[62 FR 4154, Jan. 29, 1997, as amended at 68 FR 60295, Oct. 22, 2003]

§ 402.200 How to appeal a decision denying all or part of a request.

(a) *How to appeal.* If all or part of your written request was denied, you may request that the Commissioner of Social Security, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235 review that determination. Your request for review:

(1) Must be in writing;